

Minutes
State Board of Education Study Session
Monday, March 14, 2005

The Arizona State Board of Education held a special Study Session at the Arizona Department of Education, 1535 West Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007. The meeting was called to order at 10:10AM.

Members Present

Mr. Jesse Ary
Ms. Nadine Mathis Basha
Dr. Matthew Diethelm
Ms. JoAnne Hilde
Superintendent Tom Horne
Ms. Joanne Kramer
Ms. Anita Mendoza
Dr. Karen Nicodemus
Ms. Cecilia Owen
Dr. John Pedicone

Members Absent

Dr. Michael Crow

Board Business

Pledge of Allegiance, moment of silence and roll call.

**A. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF STATE INTERVENTION
INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:**

Dr. Donna Lewis, Associate Superintendent, Accountability Division, Arizona Department of Education, introduced the staff members who would be presenting noting that they will address profiles, AYP status, and accountability formulas that have driven past decisions and may affect future decisions. Dr. Lewis noted that the school effectiveness team is closely tied together working to help schools as much as possible, giving them support prior to any labels or sanctions that might come to the school. Ms. Phyllis Schwartz, Associate Superintendent, School Effectiveness Division, Arizona Department of Education, explained that this division is in charge of:

- Standards-based teaching and learning under Ms. Marie Mancuso, Deputy Associate Superintendent;
- Best practices under Ms. Cheryl Lebo, Associate Superintendent for Teacher Quality; and
- School Improvement under Mr. Dale Parcell, Deputy Associate Superintendent for School Improvement.

Ms. Schwartz noted that the School Improvement Division has had the challenge of dealing with NCLB as well as AZ LEARNS.

Ms. Donna Kongable, School Improvement Director, ASSIST Coach Model, School Improvement Section, School Effectiveness Division, Arizona Department of Education, presented background information regarding NCLB and AZ LEARNS and the components of the School Accountability in Arizona. (Please see the information provided in the packet).

Dr. Nicodemus asked how graduation rates were calculated and Dr. Robert Franciosi, Deputy Associate Superintendent, Research and Evaluation Section, Arizona Department of Education, explained that a cohort is established from the freshman year and tracked.

Superintendent Horne stated that the state system is not a two-year period like the federal system, so each year the school will get a new achievement label, i.e. if a school was underperforming last year but is performing this year, it is a performing school for all purposes. He added that if a school is failing and a turn-around principal and teachers are sent in, this Board can decide if it wants this process to last at least three years. Recommendations will be made at the next Board meeting regarding the actions to be taken and a timeline in this regard.

Dr. Pedicone asked about the process involved under NCLB where a school does not make AYP in the second year but does make AYP in the third year. Ms. Kongable noted that the school must make AYP for two years in a row to stay frozen and come out of school improvement. If the school does not make AYP for the second year they go back into school improvement. This would result in a postponement of the process during the year that AYP was made. Ms. Kongable also highlighted the differences between NCLB and AZ LEARNS as depicted in the charts provided in the materials packet.

Superintendent Horne noted that Title I monies are not at risk but up to 10% of Title I funding has to be devoted to tutoring and/or transporting students to another school if the parent requests this assistance. Ms. Kongable added that 10% of Title I funding has to go toward professional development and must align with the school's goals.

Dr. Lewis noted that at the state level the School Effectiveness Division team assisted 81 second year underperforming schools and those schools were able to get themselves out of underperforming. There are now only 11 schools that are in the third year of underperforming and are now called failing.

Item B1 was discussed next at Dr. Lewis' request. Dr. Diethelm accepted the suggestion.

1. Presentation and discussion of AZ LEARNS governing statute (A.R.S. 15-241) and overview of state intervention process.
2. Presentation and discussion of school achievement profiles, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Methodology used for determining school profiles
 - b. Possible modifications to this methodology

Dr. Robert Franciosi, Deputy Associate Superintendent, Research and Evaluation Section, Arizona Department of Education, presented the Section's responsibility of utilizing the test results to create the school profiles which are published in the Fall. The information was presented via PowerPoint and is included in the materials packet. It was noted that the formula is an evaluation model rather than an instruction model. They then look at the targeted student findings for the trends and give this information as an evaluation tool to the schools.

Superintendent Horne stated that because the State Board deferred its decision regarding the tests the current sophomores who took the test in the second year it was administered did not think it was a high stakes test, and therefore the students did not try as hard. Mr. Horne noted that these types of anomalies are what the Research and Evaluation Section will look for in setting formulas and baselines.

Dr. Franciosi explained that the current Board policy is that a school had to have three years of data before the school got a profile. He noted that this policy is a result of waiting for three years of data in order to use an improvement measure and added that using a status measure with individual student growth three years of data would not be needed. Dr. Franciosi stated that this was of particular concern in new schools that were not able to get a profile for the first three years.

Dr. Franciosi noted that as they conduct the field trainings, they could introduce the principles of the formula if the Board will approve those principles.

It was also noted by Superintendent Horne that the AIMS scores will be released to the schools in June if the cut scores are set by this Board on May 11. Dr. Pedicone stated that he would not be satisfied to get the information just before a meeting when the decisions are to be made. Dr. Franciosi noted that student level impact data will be available before the meeting. Superintendent Horne noted that the information will not come to the Department until shortly before the meeting, so Board members will have to be able to process information quickly.

Superintendent Horne outlined the steps of the process as:

- Submission of the tests;
- Grading of the tests;
- Standard-setting process; and
- Results of the standard-setting process brought to the State Board the next day.
 - The recommendations from the Department can only come to the State Board on May 10,

the day before the decision is to be made.

- If the State Board does not make a decision on May 11 the 30-day deadline for reports to the schools/districts will not be met.

Dr. Diethelm asked if a model of everything that is going to be recommended, with 2004 data since the new data will not yet be completed, could be available for the Board to analyze and understand before the May 11 meeting. Dr. Lewis stated that they would provide a copy of the bookmarking method to each member but a model without real data would not be a good fit to analyze. Dr. Diethelm suggested that Drs. Randall and Egen meet with the Board prior to the May 11 meeting to orient members on the bookmarking method.

The Board took a ten-minute break and reconvened.

3. Presentation and discussion of the AZ LEARNS statute (A.R.S. 15-241) regarding schools failing to meet academic standards. Discussion may include, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Solutions team process and possible intervention strategies
 - b. Board's responsibility for determining management of failing schools
 - c. Hearing process for determining intervention plans
 - d. Presentation and discussion of possible state intervention timelines

Dr. Donna Lewis, Associate Superintendent, Accountability Division, Arizona Department of Education, introduced some of the team members and noted that the level of work done by this team has been stellar in making connections with the schools/districts. Dr. Lewis emphasized that the team, under Ms. Miel's direction, has worked hard to incorporate the human element into the process of organizational change. Dr. Lewis added that at the March 2, 2005, State Board meeting, the Accountability Division will present plans that have been developed through a consensus with stakeholders. She noted that the districts are working with the Department and owning the plans that are being developed and collaborating in good will with the Department.

Ms. Tommie Miel, Education Program Administrator, State Intervention Section, Arizona Department of Education, presented background information as well as the intervention process. Please see the PowerPoint presentation provided in the materials packet. Ms. Miel noted that most of the schools visited were K-8, with one middle school, one school with only two grades and some K-6 schools. These schools ranged in size from 300 to over 1100 students.

Ms. Donna Campbell, Arizona Education Association, participated in many of these meetings and stated that she was impressed by the respect with which each situation was dealt, considerations were localized and felt she had a comprehensive picture of a school and the community it served once she had read all the information provided by the team. Ms. Campbell noted that the recommendations that will be coming to the State Board have been very well considered and data-based.

The Board took a ten-minute break and then re-convened.

Ms. Miel pointed out that one outcome at a time is presented to a school, time is given for silent reading, the school's team leader facilitates a question/answer time about the information presented, and consensus is achieved as to what the level of implementation will be for each outcome. (Please see the Findings Summary provided in the materials packet). Ms. Miel noted that the next steps after the needs have been identified are to identify additional criteria including:

- The skill levels of the school leadership; and
- The ability of the school and/or district staff/faculty to provide support in implementing the needed changes.

Ms. Miel summarized the accomplishments to date:

- School goals have been identified;

- The level of implementation of the five pieces of the law have been determined;
- School's needs have been identified; and
- School's capacity to meet these needs have been looked at.
 - Based on the information gathered the determination is made as to the level of intervention for each school.

The following clarifications were made in the ensuing discussions:

- A pool of turn-around principals will be built from the applications;
 - The State Board Investigative Unit should screen the turn-around principals following the same standard for schools pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-534;
 - Specific skills for turn-around principals include personal and professional qualifications such as:
 - Curriculum development
 - Budget development
 - Curriculum alignment
 - A relater
 - A caring, compassionate person
 - A passionate person
 - Exemplary leadership skills
 - The local district school board will be able to choose a turn-around principal from two or three that have been selected as a possible good fit for the school;
 - The turn-around principal will be employed by the district and will be responsible for the progress of the school and paid at a negotiated rate to include bonuses for each additional year served;
 - The turn-around principal's work will be jointly evaluated by the school district and the Department;
 - Some of the reassigned teachers will need to re-apply where it is appropriate;
- Ms. Jill Osborn, Assistant Attorney General, explained that teachers and staff employed by the district are informed that there is a possibility that changes in staff may occur. Ms. Osborn noted that if districts cannot replace faculty/staff in the given timeframe, the district can decide what will happen with those employees who will be replaced. The district also has the option of moving staff to another school if that is a possibility within the district.
- A three-to-five year commitment is asked of the turn-around principal; however, a two-year term is written in the IGA to ensure that the district is going to look at the intervention for at least two years;
 - At the end of each year the intervention plan will be analyzed to see if it is working or if changes need to be made.
 - Consent agreements are being presented to each school and are due back, signed, to the Department by March 21, 2005, so they can be presented to the State Board for approval on March 28, 2005;
 - Sustained change has to be a collaborative process as the turn-around principals work within the community;
 - Proper implementation of the school improvement plan and the intervention will be collaborated with the Department and the school district leadership;
- Ms. Osborn explained that if the Department and the school district agree on the suggestions for intervention a recommendation will be brought to the State Board of Education. The result is a formal, signed, legal agreement that includes the signatures of the school's attorney and the Attorney General.
- Ms. Osborn added that when the agreement is signed the State Board will be notified

- about the recommended intervention, will receive a copy of the agreement, and the school/district will begin intervention after the State Board has approved the agreement.
- If necessary, the State Board of Education will conduct public hearings if a school disagrees and does not sign the agreement;
Ms. Osborn explained that the public hearing entails a public explanation to the State Board to enable the State Board to make a decision about the school/district's intervention process. She added that this is not an adversarial process but rather includes explanations and discussion. (Please see the outlined process included in the presentation materials in the packet).

Ms. Osborn responded to a question about how this process could affect charter schools noting that the charter sponsor has the responsibility of dealing with its own charter schools and the intervention process discussed today does not apply to charter schools.

B. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE ARIZONA INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE STANDARDS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

1. Update regarding AIMS test development. Discussion may include but is not limited to historical overview, test cut scores and timeline for receiving results.

Ms. Irene Hunting, Director of Test Administration and Contracts, Accountability Division, Arizona Department of Education gave an overview of Arizona's Assessment Program and the history of AIMS. Please see the PowerPoint Presentation provided in the materials packet.

For clarification Superintendent Horne noted that to comply with NCLB the results of the tests are used to evaluate the schools but the tests are not a requirement for students to graduate. It is a requirement in Arizona law, however, for students to graduate.

Dr. Pedicone noted that the timeline has been helpful in seeing the history of AIMS but that the original process was bad policy and the present Board must see that everything is done correctly.

Ms. Hunting added that both IDEA since 1997 and current state statute require that all students including special education students participate in the testing. Currently Arizona students may test on grade level or they may test on an alternative assessment, called AIMS-A. She added that local governing boards determine graduation requirements for students with disabilities.

It was noted in Ms. Hunting's overview regarding the AIMS Dual Purpose Assessment (AIMS DPA) that total testing was reduced by 40%.

Dr. Lewis explained that state law mandates a norm referenced test score which does not leave another option but added that the testing has been made more efficient.

Superintendent Horne noted that the federal government recognizes only standards-based tests, therefore a norm referenced test is not permitted to be used for any federal purpose, i.e., AYP. The norm referenced test used by the state is only to measure academic progress. Starting next year, AIMS will be used to measure academic progress and will be the sole basis for the state and national assessments. The DPA will remain with the AIMS report going to the federal government and the TerraNova information to be utilized by the state and schools.

Ms. Mendoza noted that other states have several questions on the writing prompt (persuasive essay) and asked if this was a fair way to assess students. Superintendent Horne explained that the idea is to rotate with different kinds of prompts in different years and noted that 78% of students in the first two-out-of-five tries have passed.

Ms. Hunting stated that teachers write the tests after which the tests are reviewed by CTB McGraw-Hill and the Arizona Department of Education to make certain that the tests maintain a level of difficulty from year to year and to allow CTB to substitute items with TerraNova items. (Details of the timeline of the test/item development, sample questions, and the reports are included in the presentation materials in the packet.)

Ms. Hunting highlighted the coming events related to the standard setting for AIMS HS and AIMS DPA to assist the Board's understanding of the processes and upcoming decisions to be made by the Board.

Superintendent Horne noted that the standards will be presented to the Board for approval on May 11, 2005.

Ms. Hunting outlined the bookmark process as follows:

- After the test is taken, the items are arranged in order of difficulty;
- The participants then take the test in that exact order;
- After the test, each committee member makes a determination about where the cut scores should be;
- A mark is placed at the first question where it would be reasonable for the student to miss in each category;
- A mark is placed between falls far below and approaches, between approaches and meets, and between meets and exceeds;
- The marks from all members are gathered and discussed through three rounds of conversation;
- Looking at impact data, the committee recommends the final cut scores;
- For each content area for each grade level, the committee will write a description of that proficiency level; and
- ADE and the National Assessment Accountability Advisory Council (NAAAC) will review the cut scores for an appropriate progression across the grades and then present the cut scores to the Board for review and/or approval.
 - NAAAC is made up of people from the University of Pennsylvania, University of Texas, from California and other locations who have been trained in measurement.

Further discussion ensued for clarification regarding the blueprint process, which is posted on the web, and how teachers are informed so they can teach successfully. It was noted that the teaching institutions should be re-focused and re-educated so that the students can achieve the standards. Superintendent Horne noted that the standards are drawn from a large cross-section of diverse teachers who have a realistic understanding of what is expected of the students.

Dr. Pedicone noted that the standards developed previously and up until recently have been so broad that it was impossible for teachers to perform effectively. He suggested that the standards that are most important and critical should be determined first.

Dr. Diethelm noted that Board members will have the opportunity to address specific concerns regarding standards when they are presented to the Board for discussion and/or approval.

Ms. Mendoza noted that representation on the committee from the business community would be helpful.

Superintendent Horne clarified that for grades 3-8 the Department is trying to make the test cut scores more consistent as a relatively high percentage of 3rd graders test proficient and a very low percentage of 8th graders are currently testing as proficient. In order for the tests to be consistent the cut score should be adjusted at the 8th grade level.

Dr. Diethelm noted that the test has changed but that it is more accurate.

Ms. Hilde stated that her hope is that for the next two years the Board would go through the exercise of standard setting to be assured of consistency. Ms. Hilde cautioned the Department about making sure there is consistency in the lines that are being drawn in terms of setting the standards. Dr. Lewis added that Drs. Randall and Egen from CTB could come to a May 11 meeting to present impact data for the Board's clarification.

Mr. Horne noted that reports from WestEd as well as from the national advisory board indicate that in a number of other states, standard error of measure has been used, with a range of ½ - 2. He added that this information was presented to state testing directors from various districts and they favored the use of the standard error of measure.

Ms. Hunting added that a peer review from NCLB makes certain there is compliance with federal rules, an alignment study, as well as a beginning process for next year's assessment cycle which will include science assessment for the year after that.

The Board took a ten minute break and then reconvened.

2. Member comments and discussion of items related to AIMS

Ms. Hilde's concerns regarding the AIMS process include:

- Mathematics – 2 units needed to graduate
 - Algebra and Geometry are tested but a student can graduate in Arizona currently without having taken either one of these subjects.
 - Information from public schools indicates that only 50% of students coming in as freshmen are ready for Algebra so only about 50% can pass when they are tested at the end of their sophomore year.
 - Two schools were thrilled to have a 52% and 54% passage because this was higher than they had anticipated
 - There is still pressure on the 9th grade student who is ill-prepared
- Need for a rubric for the qualified high school graduate with the following categories:
 - Meets the local standards, passes all three AIMS and gets a diploma.
 - Special Education students who meet the local requirements, complete all aspects of their IEP and graduate.
 - Meets all high school requirements, passes two out of three tests, and in the subject that they do not pass the teacher can verify that the student passed the concepts that are on the AIMS test, and the student graduates.
 - ELL students with specified qualifications.
 - The student who comes in as a second semester junior who may have passed a high stakes test in another state with provisions for reciprocity after evaluation of tests/cut scores/skill levels, etc.
 - Meets all requirements but doesn't pass any of the AIMS. Ms. Hilde noted that she would be uncomfortable with having this category as part of the rubric as it would indicate that a student would have left school without the necessary skills.

Superintendent Horne commented that these issues would be legislative decisions and are being debated at this time in the legislature. He cautioned that in New Jersey the teachers were pressured to move the students through by signing a verification of the student's progress. Mr. Horne added that he would not support Ms. Hilde's recommendations but that the legislature would be very interested in them.

Ms. Hilde asked if this could be looked at as a pilot program with some ending component as high school graduation requirements without going to the legislature. Mr. Horne responded that state statute requires the State Board to develop a test that students must take to graduate.

Dr. Pedicone noted his concern about the Board being pressed to make such far-reaching decisions very quickly and stated that the Board should meet and list the concerns and agreements in this regard that include the following:

- How to change course
- Are we ready
- Problems and solutions
- The results of the ASU study
- Ms. Basha noted that the concerns and questions raised by the State Board in October 2004 were forwarded for this study and the first two items to be addressed in the study are:
 - Looking at academic concepts students completed successfully and areas of difficulty as it reflects on AIMS, and
 - Demographic profiles as they relate to AIMS.

- Mr. Yanez noted that the first question of the study will be answered at the March 28, 2005 State Board meeting and the second question will be addressed at the April 25, 2005 State Board meeting.

Ms. Basha noted that this takes time and thought and time is running out on this issue. She added that in comparing the history of AIMS with the class of 2006, there are many things that are not being done any more that were being done in the early development years of AIMS. In addition, there have been three State Superintendents, a continual change in staff with regard to testing, changes in the State Board Executive Director position, and the natural turnover of State Board members, as well as different Governors and Legislators. Ms. Basha added that the students are involved in the continuum as well and a balance needs to be created somehow in this process.

Dr. Pedicone added that his purpose in having more dialogue is to reiterate the commonalities of the State Board members in this regard as well as the common concerns that still need to be addressed. He noted that one of the most critical issues at this time is the class of 2006. Dr. Pedicone stated that the State Board should be prepared in the event that this issue is thrust back into the Board's purview and that further dialogue may give the legislature more information as well.

Dr. Diethelm reminded members that an April 4 meeting has been scheduled where informed facts/data can be presented and each member will have the opportunity to express their opinion.

Ms. Basha suggested that WestEd could facilitate this session/roundtable to assist in reaching consensus. Mr. Horne reported that the Department has considered at every point along the way what needed to be done for this to be strong in case of a legal challenge. He added that the Department has consulted with its national advisory council on these issues, as well. Mr. Horne noted that everything is being done to bring instruction to students and they have three more chances to pass. In addition, tutoring is now being provided, results are being reported by concept in early Spring for summer remediation, and questions are being written by teachers for a better match to the standards. He added that about 60% of the tutoring funds have been utilized but students are watching the legislature and may think that the requirement will not be enforced.

Ms. Mendoza suggested that an interesting aspect may be for a borderline student to come before the faculty and demonstrate how they are able to show proficiency.

Dr. Diethelm asked Mr. Yanez to facilitate the April 4 meeting and Ms. Basha to arrange for a facilitator from WestEd. Dr. Diethelm stated that all the time that is needed to address AIMS concerns will be provided as well as an hour to address any intervention issues that may need to be discussed.

Ms. Basha noted her appreciation for the input in today's discussion and added that an incredible amount of work has been done to date and the Board is moving in the right direction.

Dr. Diethelm added that the consensus of the Board is that the AIMS process is good and getting better, motivation is being provided by the process to the schools, and examples of improvement in instruction and readiness are evident. He reminded members that the Board has a near-term issue that a small portion of the student population may be unfairly treated but that much work has already been done to date.

C. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No public requests to address the State Board were received.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Basha. Seconded by Ms. Kramer. *Motion passes.*